THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The number of sugar factories in the country during 2002-2003 were 496. Though it is premature to estimate the number of sugar mills during 2005-06, the sugar factories as on 31.10.2005 were 571.

(c) Question does not arise.

Complaints by MPs

2623. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that letters/correspondence pertaining to complaints by the MPs are not being responded to by his Ministry;

(b) the details of the letters/correspondence from January, 2005 till date addressed to his Ministry by the Members of Parliament;

(c) whether any such letter pertaining to complaint against the violation of condition by some magazines in New Delhi is pending for reply;

(d) the status on this letter/correspondence till date, alongwith the action taken in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (e) The Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

BIS on technical barriers to trade agreement

2624. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bureau of Indian Standards has been entrusted with the task to work on technical barriers to trade agreement;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the agreement ensures improved market access to countries across the world; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As an obligation under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the Government has designated the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) as its TBT related National Enquiry Point. BIS, as the National Enquiry Point, answers all the relevant enquiries from the Enquiry Points of other countries pertaining to technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures adopted or proposed to be adopted within the country. BIS also disseminates the TBT Notifications of other WTO members bodies to the national stakeholders. It also functions as an information centre within the country.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The TBT Agreement does not allow WTO Members to adopt any TBT related measures which create unnecessary trade barriers. IF any regulation causes unnecessary trade barriers to our exports abroad, the same are addressed appropriately through bilateral or multilateral mode by the Government.

Public prosecutors

2625. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to provide for a network of public prosecutors to assist the poor and lower middle class consumers seeking to file complaints under the Consumer Protection Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government have any other plan to assist this category of consumers in view of the technicalities involved in various consumers products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir.